

AMENDED IN SENATE APRIL 12, 2012

**SENATE BILL**

**No. 1174**

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**Introduced by Senator Walters  
(Coauthor: Senator La Malfa)**

February 22, 2012

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An act to amend Section 35401.5 of the Vehicle Code, relating to vehicles.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SB 1174, as amended, Walters. Vehicles: length—~~semitrailer limitations: exemption~~: motorsports.

Existing law *generally prohibits a vehicle from exceeding a length of 40 feet, and a combination of vehicles from exceeding a total length of 65 feet, with various specific exceptions. Existing law* authorizes the Department of Transportation or local authorities, with regard to highways under their respective jurisdiction, to issue a special permit authorizing the operation of a combination of vehicles consisting of a truck tractor semitrailer combination with a maximum length from kingpin to rearmost axle measurement of not more than 46 feet, if the trailers are used exclusively or primarily in connection with motorsports, as defined.

This bill would instead exempt a combination of vehicles consisting of a truck tractor and semitrailer, or of a truck tractor, semitrailer, and trailer, from ~~all specified length limitations on the length of trailers~~ if *the distance from the kingpin to the rearmost axle of the semitrailer or trailer does not exceed 46 feet, the overall length of the semitrailer or trailer is 56 feet or less, and the semitrailer or trailer is used exclusively or primarily in connection with motorsports, as defined.*

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: yes.  
State-mandated local program: no.

*The people of the State of California do enact as follows:*

1     SECTION 1. Section 35401.5 of the Vehicle Code is amended  
2     to read:  
3     35401.5. (a) A combination of vehicles consisting of a truck  
4     tractor and semitrailer, or of a truck tractor, semitrailer, and trailer,  
5     is not subject to the limitations of Sections 35400 and 35401, when  
6     operating on the *Dwight D. Eisenhower* National System of  
7     Interstate and Defense Highways or when using those portions of  
8     federal-aid primary system highways that have been qualified by  
9     the United States Secretary of Transportation for that use, or when  
10    using routes appropriately identified by the Department of  
11    Transportation or local authorities as provided in subdivision (c)  
12    or (d), if all of the following conditions are met:  
13    (1) The length of the semitrailer in exclusive combination with  
14    a truck tractor does not exceed 48 feet. A semitrailer not more than  
15    53 feet in length shall satisfy this requirement when configured  
16    with two or more rear axles, the rearmost of which is located 40  
17    feet or less from the kingpin or when configured with a single axle  
18    which is located 38 feet or less from the kingpin. For purposes of  
19    this paragraph, a motortruck used in combination with a semitrailer,  
20    when that combination of vehicles is engaged solely in the  
21    transportation of motor vehicles, camper units, or boats, is  
22    considered to be a truck tractor.  
23    (2) Neither the length of the semitrailer nor the length of the  
24    trailer when simultaneously in combination with a truck tractor  
25    exceeds 28 feet 6 inches.  
26    (b) Subdivisions (b), (d), and (e) of Section 35402 do not apply  
27    to combinations of vehicles operated subject to the exemptions  
28    provided by this section.  
29    (c) Combinations of vehicles operated pursuant to subdivision  
30    (a) may also use highways not specified in subdivision (a) that  
31    provide reasonable access to terminals and facilities for purposes  
32    limited to fuel, food, lodging, and repair when that access is  
33    consistent with the safe operation of the combinations of vehicles  
34    and when the facility is within one road mile of identified points

1 of ingress and egress to or from highways specified in subdivision  
2 (a) for use by those combinations of vehicles.

3 (d) The Department of Transportation or local authorities may  
4 establish a process whereby access to terminals or services may  
5 be applied for upon a route not previously established as an access  
6 route. The denial of a request for access to terminals and services  
7 shall be only on the basis of safety and an engineering analysis of  
8 the proposed access route. If a written request for access has been  
9 properly submitted and has not been acted upon within 90 days of  
10 receipt by the department or the appropriate local agency, the  
11 access shall be deemed automatically approved. Thereafter, the  
12 route shall be deemed open for access by all other vehicles of the  
13 same type regardless of ownership. In lieu of processing an access  
14 application, the Department of Transportation or local authorities  
15 with respect to highways under their respective jurisdictions may  
16 provide signing, mapping, or a listing of highways as necessary  
17 to indicate the use of specific routes as terminal access routes. For  
18 purposes of this subdivision, “terminal” means either of the  
19 following:

20 (1) A facility where freight originates, terminates, or is handled  
21 in the transportation process.

22 (2) A facility where a motor carrier maintains operating  
23 facilities.

24 (e) Nothing in subdivision (c) or (d) authorizes state or local  
25 agencies to require permits of terminal operators or to charge  
26 terminal operators fees for the purpose of attaining access for  
27 vehicles described in this section.

28 (f) Notwithstanding subdivision (d), the limitations of access  
29 specified in that subdivision do not apply to licensed carriers of  
30 household goods when directly enroute to or from a point of  
31 loading or unloading of household goods, if travel on highways  
32 other than those specified in subdivision (a) is necessary and  
33 incidental to the shipment of the household goods.

34 (g) ~~Notwithstanding Sections 35400 and 35401, a~~ A combination  
35 of vehicles consisting of a truck tractor and semitrailer, or of a  
36 truck tractor, semitrailer, and trailer, is ~~exempt from all limitations~~  
37 ~~on the length of trailers not subject to the limitations under Sections~~  
38 ~~35400 and 35401, if the distance from the kingpin to the rearmost~~  
39 ~~axle of the semitrailer or trailer does not exceed 46 feet, the overall~~  
40 ~~length of the semitrailer or trailer is 56 feet or less, and the~~

1 *semitrailer or trailer is used* exclusively or primarily ~~used~~ in  
2 connection with motorsports. As used in this subdivision,  
3 “motorsports” means an event, and all activities leading up to that  
4 event, including, but not limited to, administration, testing, practice,  
5 promotion, and merchandising, that is sanctioned under the  
6 auspices of the member organizations of the Automobile  
7 Competition Committee for the United States.

8 (h) The Legislature finds and declares both of the following:

9 (1) In authorizing the use of 53-foot semitrailers, it is the intent  
10 of the Legislature to conform with ~~Section 3111(b)(1)(C)~~  
11 *3111(b)(1)(C)* of Title 49 of the United States Code by permitting  
12 the continued use of semitrailers of the dimensions as those that  
13 were in actual and legal use on December 1, 1982, and does not  
14 intend this action to be a precedent for future increases in the  
15 parameters of any of those vehicles that would adversely affect  
16 the turning maneuverability of vehicle combinations.

17 (2) In exempting *semitrailers and* trailers used exclusively or  
18 primarily for motorsports from limitations on the length of  
19 *semitrailers and* trailers, it is the intent of the Legislature to conform  
20 with Section 3111(b)(1)(F) of Title 49 of the United States Code.  
21 It is also the intent of the Legislature that this action not be a  
22 precedent for future increases in the distance from the kingpin to  
23 the rearmost axle of *semitrailers and trailers* that would adversely  
24 affect the turning maneuverability of vehicle combinations.